Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) An electronic camera having a multi-shooting mode in which data of a composite image is generated by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising:

~~a release switch for instructing execution of a shooting operation;~~a first switch that instructs start of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

a second switch that instructs end of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

an image pickup that performs the continuous shooting according to an operation to said ~~release switch~~first and second switches to generate data of a plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode;

a controller that changes an extracting rate according to the number of images generated by said image pickup, and extracts the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images according to the changed extracting rate and as a result of the operation of said second switch; and

the controller arranges and composites the data of the predetermined number of frame images extracted by said controller to generate the data of the composite image as a result of the operation of said second switch.

2. (Previously Presented) The electronic camera according to Claim 1, wherein said controller performs the extraction at such intervals that intervals at which frame images in extracted data have been shot become substantially uniform.

3. (Currently Amended) An electronic camera having a multi-shooting mode in which data of a composite image is generated by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising:

~~a release switch for instructing execution of a shooting operation;~~a first switch that instructs start of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

a second switch that instructs end of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

an image pickup that performs the continuous shooting according to an operation to said ~~release switch~~first and second switches to generate data of a plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode;

a controller that calculates a difference between frame images in the data of the frame images generated by said image pickup, the difference representing an amount of variation in an object;

the controller extracts data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images at such intervals that the smaller the difference between the frame images, the longer the intervals; and

the controller arranges and composites the data of the predetermined number of frame images extracted by said controller to generate the data of the composite image as a result of the operation of said second switch.

4. (Previously Presented) The electronic camera according to Claim 3, wherein said controller extracts the data of the predetermined number of frame images in ascending order of the calculated differences.

5. (Currently Amended) An electronic camera having a multi-shooting mode in which data of a composite image is generated by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising:

~~a release switch for instructing execution of a shooting operation;~~ a first switch that instructs start of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

a second switch that instructs end of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

an image pickup that performs the continuous shooting according to an operation to said ~~release switch~~first and second switches to generate data of a plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode;

a controller that selects the data of at least the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images according to the number of frame images generated by said image pickup, and calculates a difference between frame images in the selected data, the difference representing an amount of variation in an object;

the controller extracts the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images at such intervals that the smaller the difference between the frame images, the longer the intervals; and

the controller arranges and composites the data of the predetermined number of frame images extracted by said controller to generate the data of the composite image as a result of the operation of said second switch.

6. (Currently Amended) An electronic camera having a multi-shooting mode in which data of a composite image is generated by extracting data of a predetermined number of frame images from data of a plurality of frame images generated by continuous shooting, and by compositing the extracted data of the frame images, comprising:

~~a release switch for instructing execution of a shooting operation;~~ a first switch that instructs start of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

a second switch that instructs end of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

an image pickup that performs the continuous shooting according to an operation to said ~~release switch~~first and second switches to generate data of the plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode;

a controller that extracts the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode at such intervals that an Nth frame image data to be extracted is generated by shooting at a time of an Xth power of (N–1) where X is more than zero when a first frame image data to be extracted is assumed to be generated by shooting at a time zero; and

the controller arranges and composites data of the predetermined number of frame images extracted by said controller to generate the data of the composite image.

7. (Currently Amended) An electronic camera having a multi-shooting mode in which data of a composite image is generated by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising:

~~a release switch for instructing start and end of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;~~ a first switch that instructs start of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

a second switch that instructs end of the continuous shooting in said multi-shooting mode;

an image pickup that performs the continuous shooting according to an operation to said ~~release switch~~first and second switches to generate data of a plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode;

a controller that extracts data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of a plurality of frame images in said multi-shooting mode in such a manner that the data extracted includes data of frame images shot at the start and end of the continuous shooting; and

the controller arranges and composites the data of the predetermined number of frame images extracted by said controller to generate the data of the composite image as a result of the operation of said second switch.

8. (Previously Presented) The electronic camera according to Claim 7, wherein the controller changes an extracting rate according to the number of frame images generated by said image pickup and extracts the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the generated data of the frame images according to the changed extracting rate.

9. (Currently Amended) The electronic camera according to ~~claim~~ Claim 7, wherein the controller calculates a difference between frame images of the generated data of the frame images, the difference representing an amount of variation in an object, and wherein

said controller extracts the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images at such intervals that the smaller the difference between the frame images, the longer the intervals.

10. (Currently Amended) A method for generating data of a composite image by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising the steps of:

generating data of a plurality of frame images by continuous shooting according to the instructions to start and end the continuous shooting;

changing an extracting rate according to the number of frame images generated and extracting the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the generated data of the frame images according to the changed extracting rate and according to the instruction to end the continuous shooting; and

generating the data of the composite image by arranging and compositing the extracted data of the frame images according to the instruction to end the continuous shooting.

11. (Currently Amended) A method for generating data of a composite image by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising the steps of:

generating data of a plurality of frame images by continuous shooting according to the instructions to start and end the continuous shooting;

calculating a difference between frame images in the generated data, the difference representing an amount of variation in an object;

extracting the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the generated data of the frame images at such intervals that the smaller the difference between the frame images, the longer the intervals; and

generating the data of the composite image by arranging and compositing the extracted data according to the instruction to end the continuous shooting.

12. (Currently Amended) A method for generating data of a composite image by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising the steps of:

generating data of a plurality of frame images by continuous shooting according to the instructions to start and end the continuous shooting;

selecting data of at least the predetermined number of frame images from the generated data of the frame images according to the number of frame images generated, and calculating a difference between frame images in the selected data, the difference representing an amount of variation in an object;

extracting data of the predetermined number of frame images from the generated data of the frame images at such intervals that the smaller the difference between the frame images, the longer the intervals; and

generating the data of the composite image by arranging and compositing the extracted data of the frame images according to the instruction to end the continuous shooting.

13. (Currently Amended) A method for generating data of a composite image by extracting data of a predetermined number of frame images from data of a plurality of frame images generated by continuous shooting and by compositing the extracted data of the frame images, comprising the steps of:

generating data of a plurality of frame images ~~by~~ according to instructions to start and end continuous shooting;

extracting the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images at such intervals that an Nth frame image data to be extracted is generated by shooting at a time of an Xth power of (N–1) where X is more than zero when a first frame image data to be extracted is assumed to be generated by shooting at a time zero; and

generating the data of the composite image by arranging and compositing the extracted data of the frame images.

14. (Currently Amended) A method for generating data of a composite image by arranging and compositing data of a predetermined number of frame images generated by continuous shooting, comprising the steps of:

~~instructing start and end of the continuous shooting;~~

generating data of a plurality of frame images ~~by the~~according to instructions to start and end continuous shooting ~~according to the instruction~~;

extracting the data of the predetermined number of frame images from the data of the plurality of frame images in a such manner that the data extracted includes data of frame images shot at the start and end of the continuous shooting; and

generating the data of the composite image by arranging and compositing the extracted data of the frame images according to the instruction to end the continuous shooting.

15. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second switches constitute a single mechanism.

16. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 1, wherein said first and second switches constitute different mechanisms.

17. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 3, wherein said first and second switches constitute a single mechanism.

18. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 3, wherein said first and second switches constitute different mechanisms.

19. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 5, wherein said first and second switches constitute a single mechanism.

20. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 5, wherein said first and second switches constitute different mechanisms.

21. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 6, wherein said first and second switches constitute a single mechanism.

22. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 6, wherein said first and second switches constitute different mechanisms.

23. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 7, wherein said first and second switches constitute a single mechanism.

24. (New) The electronic camera according to Claim 7, wherein said first and second switches constitute different mechanisms.